

# *Gourmet guide to the NSW South Coast*

Once better known for its fish 'n' chip shops and milk bars than organic produce or upscale eateries, a shifting demographic has seen gradual gentrification along the NSW South Coast.

Combine this with old-school producers who've just kept doing what they do well and there are lots of interesting flavours to explore, from artisanal producers and farm-gate fresh produce to boutique wineries, friendly bistros, and even fine-dining restaurants.

## **Fresh seafood**

Unsurprisingly, seafood is a speciality of this coastal region and many of the area's restaurants feature fresh, locally caught produce on their menus. There's also the option to purchase some directly from the source.

For oysters, try Jim Wild's Oyster Service at Greenwell Point near Culburra Beach or Broadway Oysters on the Pambula Lake foreshore. Enjoy them freshly shucked, perhaps with just a squeeze of lemon and an icy cold beer, or get them packed up for take-away.

Kiama Fisheries sells a wide range of seafood literally off the boat, including snapper, bream, cod, bug lobsters, and prawns. In a sign that the area's seafood is worth taking seriously, renowned seafood specialist [Rick Stein](#) opened an upscale fish restaurant at [Bannisters](#) in Mollymook in 2009, a beautiful spot to enjoy a shared shellfish platter caught from the waters nearby.

### **Fine local dining**

[St Isidore](#) in the Milton hills, not far from Mollymook and Ulladulla, stars local produce on its wide-ranging, Greek-accented menu, in dishes such as saganaki cheese with quince wrapped in vine leaves or local blue-eye trevalla with mussels, fennel, polenta and olive.

In Wollongong, Peter Sheppard of the award-winning [Caveau](#) restaurant has long been a vocal champion of the region. Book in a course at Caveau's [Cooking School](#) to get hands-on with local produce.

At the [River Moruya](#) restaurant, produce is sourced locally, organically grown where possible, and the menu centres on local seafood and house-cured meats.

### **Amongst the vines**

The area's leading wine-growing region is the Shoalhaven and surrounds, where you'll find around twenty vineyards and cellar doors to visit. The local maritime climate produces white wines that are fruit-driven with crisp, natural acidity.

[Coolangatta Estate](#), one of the region's earliest producers, is a standout, particularly for its semillon and sauvignon blanc,

whilst Cambewarra Estate, northwest of Nowra, is a perfect place to sample verdelho and chardonnay. Other wineries to try include Cupitt Winery, Two Figs Winery, Silos Estate, Tilba Valley Wines and Fern Gully Winery.

### **Stay awhile**

Book a luxury suite at the Bannisters, a cliff-top, seaside hotel in Mollismook with ocean views, an award-winning restaurant, and a pampering day spa. Or go glamping with luxury tent accommodation at Paperbark Camp, a peaceful bush retreat in Jervis Bay that was one of NSW's first eco-lodges. The Bower near Broulee is another option, offering self-contained cottages in the bush.

Topics: NSW

Photography: BERRY SOURDOUGH CAFE

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### **MEET LOCAL PRODUCERS**

**Montague Coffee** is a boutique roaster in Narooma that has helped put the region's coffee on the map with its locally roasted speciality, fair trade coffee. Head to the **ABC Cheese Factory** or **Bodalla Dairy** to try cheeses made with local milk. At **South Coast Providores** in Berry you'll find plenty of homemade preserves, chutneys, relishes and sauces to enjoy them with.

Should you happen to be in Berry on a Friday, sample the best of Shoalhaven's produce at the Locavore Fridays Farmers' Market across the road. The rustic **Berry Sourdough Bakery and Café** is open for breakfast and lunch and sells sourdough breads, pastries, brioche, tarts, and teacakes baked daily. You can also find their products at the **Milkwood Bakery** on Berry's main street.

Last but not least, no road trip to the South Coast is complete without a pit stop at **The Famous Berry Doughnut Van**, where old-fashioned sugary cinnamon-dusted doughnuts are made to order.

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